

Appln. No. 10/019,992

Attorney Docket No. 10541-929

II. Remarks

Reconsideration and reexamination of this application is herein requested. Claims 19-32 remain pending in the application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge the examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 23, 24, 29 and 30. Accordingly, claims 23 and 24 have been rewritten into independent form, including the limitations of their base and intervening claims.

Informalities

In the Office Action mailed July 19, 2006, Claims 23, 24, 29 and 30 were objected to because the term "knives" lacked proper antecedent basis. These claims have been amended to replace the term "knives" with the term "cutting means", which has proper antecedent basis.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 19, 25-28 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Bitzel. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully point out that Bitzel includes only a single cutting means, a punch. In order to achieve the cutting of a workpiece, Bitzel discloses rotating or changing the position/orientation of this single punch. Thus, Bitzel has only one cutting means; not the multiple cutting means as claimed in each independent claim of the present application. Additionally, Bitzel fails to disclose or suggest operating three cutting means in the claimed sequential manner. The rejection should therefore be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 19-22, 25-28, 31 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Bitzel in view of Fazls. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Independent claims of the present application each specifically recite the use of three cutting means. As noted above, Bitzel fails to disclose three cutting

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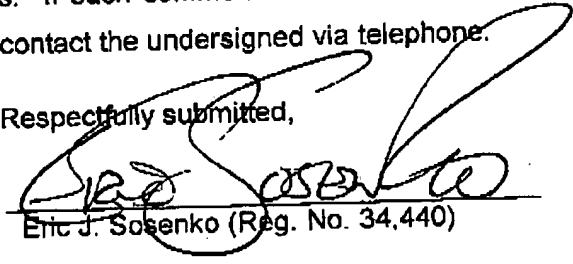
means. Rather, Bitzel discloses a single punch which is rotated to make multiple cuts. Fazis similarly only discloses a single cutting means. Additionally, neither Bitzel nor Fazis discloses three cutting means operating in the claimed sequential manner. Accordingly, Bitzel in view of Fazis fails to disclose or suggest such the claimed procedure.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is submitted that pending claims 19-32 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner grant allowance of these claims. If such communication would expedite this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

October 19, 2006
Date


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EJS/alr

Attachments: None